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SUBJECT: MUKACHEVO CEMETERY

REF: MOSCOW 13744 AND PREVIOUS

1. PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE DESCENDENTS OF MUNKACS (MUKACHEVO) HAS WRITTEN THE SECRETARY AND CABLED THE WHITE HOUSE TO REQUEST THAT USG INTERVENE WITH SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO HELP PRESERVE JEWISH CEMETERY AT MUKACHEVO, UKRAINIAN SSR, LOCATED NEAR UZHGOROD, AND TO HELP OBTAIN PERMISSION FOR EXHUMATION BY OTHER THAN CLOSE RELATIVES. ASSOCIATION STATES THAT CEMETERY IS DUE FOR

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LIQUIDATION ON DECEMBER 31 UNDER SOVIET LAW PERMITTING SUCH ACTION WITH REGARD TO CEMETERIES INACTIVE FOR 25 YEARS. ASSOCIATION NOTES THAT CEMETERY IS BURIAL PLACE OF

RENOWNED CHASSIDIC RABBIS AND SCHOLARS AND THAT IN MOST INSTANCES IMMEDIATE FAMILIES OF THOSE BURIED IN CEMETERY WERE VICTIMS OF AUSCHWITZ. ASSOCIATION STATES IT IS AWARE THAT CEMETERY IS IN A STATE OF DISREPAIR AND OFFERS TO ASSUME FINANCIAL BURDEN TO RESTORE AND MAINTAIN CEMETERY AND TO SEND A COMMITTEE TO USSR TO FACILITATE AN ARRANGEMENT WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

2. MUNKACS ASSOCIATION HAS ASKED RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER, PRESIDENT OF APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION, TO DEAL WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION. (FROM REFTELS, EMBASSY WILL BE AWARE OF RABBI SCHNEIER'S PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENT IN MUKACHEVO CEMETERY CASE.) RABBI SCHNEIER AND FORMER AMBASSADOR ANGIER BIDDLE DUKE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION, CALLED ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE NOVEMBER 23 TO DISCUSS WAYS USG, FOUNDATION, AND MUNKACS ASSOCIATION COULD WORK TOWARD HAVING CEMETERY PRESERVED AS A NATIONAL LANDMARK. ARMITAGE SAID THAT USG WOULD BE GLAD TO ASSIST EFFORT BY PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS TO PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN CEMETERY, BUT SUGGESTED THAT MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH WOULD BE FOR ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED TO PRESENT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS TO SOVIETS WHICH COULD BE SUPPORTED BY REPRESENTATION TO MFA. SCHNEIER AND DUKE AGREED WITH THIS.

3. RABBI SCHNEIER HAS INFORMED US THAT HE AND DUKE SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH SOVEMBASSY COUNSELOR ISAKOV RE MUKACHEVO CEMETERY. ISAKOV SUGGESTED THAT APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION CONTINUE TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH VIKTOR TITOV OF SOVIET COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND WITH LOCAL UKRAINIAN OFFICIALS. FOUNDATION HAS SENT CABLES TO TITOV AND TO SERGEY ORLENKO, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF THE TRANS-CARPATHIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, WITH WHOM SCHNEIER MET IN UZHGOROD ON MOST RECENT VISIT TO USSR. CABLES WILL REQUEST

PRESERVATION OF CEMETERY AS A HISTORIC LANDMARK, ARRANGEMENT FOR EXHUMATION OF BODIES, WILL OFFER TO PAY FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE OF CEMETERY AND TO SEND SMALL GROUP OF REPRESENTATIVES OF FOUNDATION AND MUNKACS ASSOCIATION TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS.

4. TO SUPPORT THIS EFFORT, EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO MAKE REPRESENTATION AT POLITICAL LEVEL OF MFA AND PRESENT NOTE MAKING FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE DESCENDENTS OF MUKACHEVO UKRAINIAN SSR HAS WRITTEN THE SECRETARY OF

STATE AND THE WHITE HOUSE TO REQUEST THAT THE USG SUPPORT THEIR EFFORT TO HELP PRESERVE THE JEWISH CEMETERY LOCATED AT MUKACHEVO AND TO ARRANGE FOR THE EXHUMATION AND TRANSFER OF THE REMAINS OF SOME OF THOSE BURIED IN THE CEMETERY. THE ASSOCIATION HAS ENLISTED THE ASSISTANCE OF RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER, PRESIDENT OF THE APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION, WHO ON PREVIOUS TRIPS TO THE SOVIET UNION HAS DISCUSSED THIS QUESTION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOVIET COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS AT UZHGOROD AND MUKACHEVO.

B. THE ASSOCIATION POINTS OUT THAT THE CEMETERY AT MUKACHEVO IS THE BURIAL PLACE OF RENOWNED CHASSIDIC RABBIS AND SCHOLARS AND IS CONSIDERED TO BE CONSECRATED GROUND. IT ALSO NOTES THAT MOST OF THE SURVIVORS OF THOSE BURIED AT MUKACHEVO CEMETERY WERE THEMSELVES VICTIMS OF AUSCHWITZ.

C. THE ASSOCIATION HAS INFORMED THE USG THAT IT IS AWARE THAT THE CEMETERY IS IN A STATE OF DISREPAIR AND STATES THAT IT IS PREPARED TO ASSUME THE FINANCIAL BURDEN TO RESTORE AND MAINTAIN THE CEMETERY SO THAT IT MIGHT BE PRESERVED AS A HISTORIC LANDMARK. THE ASSOCIATION FURTHER STATES THAT IT HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT AFTER DECEMBER 31, 1976, THERE IS A PLAN TO LIQUIDATE THE CEMETERY.

D. THE ASSOCIATION HAS ASKED THE USG TO APPROACH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WITH THE REQUEST THAT THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT MUKACHEVO BE PRESERVED AND THAT PERMISSION BE GRANTED FOR EXHUMATION OF THE REMAINS OF SOME OF THOSE BURIED THERE BY OTHER THAN CLOSE RELATIVES. THE ASSOCIATION IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PREPARED TO SEND TO THE USSR A SMALL COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION TO DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS WITH RESPONSIBLE SOVIET OFFICIALS IN MOSCOW, KIEV, UZHGOROD OR MUKACHEVO, AS DESIGNATED BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT. THE APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION HAS SENT CABLES TO THE SOVIET COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND TO OFFICIALS IN THE UKRAINIAN SSR MAKING THESE SAME PROPOSALS.

E. THE USG STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE EFFORTS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE DESCENDENTS OF MUKACHEVO AND THE APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION, VIEWING THIS AS A PROFOUNDLY HUMANITARIAN MATTER WHICH IS IN ACCORD WITH THE AIMS OF THE FINAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE. THE USG EXPRESSES ITS FIRM HOPE THAT THE DESIRES OF THOSE AMERICANS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE MUKACHEVO CEMETERY CAN BE MET BY THE

RESPONSIBLE SOVIET AUTHORITIES.

F. THE ASSOCIATION OF THE DESCENDENTS OF MUKACHEVO AND THE APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE AN EARLY RESPONSE FROM THE RESPONSIBLE SOVIET OFFICIALS TO THE FOLLOWING POINTS: ARE THE RESPONSIBLE SOVIET OFFICIALS AGREEABLE TO THE PROPOSALS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE DESCENDENTS OF MUKACHEVO TO PRESERVE THE CEMETERY AT MUKACHEVO? UNDER WHOSE JURISDICTION DOES THE QUESTION OF THE PRESERVATION OF THE CEMETERY AT MUKACHEVO FALL? ARE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT OR UKRAINIAN REPUBLIC OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN THIS MATTER PREPARED TO RECEIVE A SMALL GROUP

DESIGNATED BY THE ASSOCIATION TO DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS? WITH WHOM SHOULD THE ASSOCIATION BE IN TOUCH TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUCH A VISIT?

5. DEPARTMENT WILL MAKE SIMILAR REPRESENTATION TO SOVIET EMBASSY HERE. KISSINGER

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